

some alabaster statue immune to heartache and pain.

> But soon she would feel no more.

> The frigid water lapping around her bare feet felt like the sting of a thousand needles. It would hurt to walk into its icy depths. But the pain would be nothing compared to the devastating emptiness and aching sense of loss that had driven her to this desolate beach, and to this final, desperate act.

> And it was all because of him. All because he was getting married today. All because her life would become as bleak and lonely a place as the deserted stretch of beach she chose to end it on. How utterly ironic.

> "Damn, you, Fox Mulder!" Scully cried, tears blurring her eyes. How could he do this to her? How could ever consider marrying that...vampire lady!

> Her name was Kristen. He'd met the blood-lusting woman on a case, a case he'd worked alone during that terrible, dark time of her abduction. No doubt about it, Kristen had an allure; she was provocative and enticing and quickly sensed he was lonely, hurting, a man driven beyond the edge. He seemed to be thirsting for danger, and she could more than adequately fulfill his need for it. And she had. His reckless abandon nearly cost him his life; he'd barely escaped the fire that day--the fire that had claimed two others as well as Kristen. Or so he'd thought.

> Until six months ago, when Mulder got the call.
 Kristen was alive! Somehow, she'd survived.

> Mulder was shocked, then intrigued, as she told him how she'd turned her life around. She'd been in the Peace Corps. for the last year. No more blood sucking. Now she was into making mud huts, planting crops, and being a productive member of society. His curiosity piqued, he had to see the new-and-improved version for himself. And again, he fell victim to her cunning ways and fatal charm.

> Scully had seen the signs, had seen the way Kristen had ensnared him, but it was easier to just shut it out, deny it, pretend it didn't exist. Pretend she really wasn't going to lose him to this bloodsucking phony. She refused to believe he had feelings for this creature. He'd come to his senses, she told herself. And how could she protest? She had no claim on him. They were friends, partners. And friends didn't marry each other. Or stop each other from marrying someone else. But it was wrong! Kristen wanted only to sink her fangs into him forever.

> And when Mulder had told her the news--that he and Kristen were getting married--it felt like he'd driven a wooden stake through her heart. She'd wanted to cry out, throw herself against him, beg him please...please, don't do this. He was making a mistake, a terrible horrible mistake.

> But she said nothing, and simply bore her pain quietly, her years of medical and F.B.I. training having taught her well how to hide her emotions and mask her true feelings. Anytime she tried to say something to him, her throat would close and her eyes would fill with tears. She was afraid to tell him how she truly felt, that she loved him, had been in love with him, silently, secretly, for so long.
 And now that secret would die out in the cold ocean, along with her, and Mulder would never know the truth.

>
 As if in a trance, Scully stepped forward into the pounding surf, the water so cold it made her gasp and tremble. Her feet went numb. Soon, her mind would follow.

>
 She pushed herself farther, feeling strangely detached, as if she were watching herself from a distance. She hadn't bothered to shed her coat, and her water-logged clothing would quickly weigh her

down.

>The quicker the better, she thought, before she came to her senses, before her brain started screaming, No! Stop! What are you doing?!

> She was up to her waist in the icy water, her whole body shivering. She couldn't feel her legs. Soon, the water would swallow her up and she wouldn't have to live a tortured life, having to keep Mulder at arm's length, loving him and wanting him so desperately, yet knowing she could never have him, that he belonged to someone else. And would, forever.

> "Scully! Scully! The seagulls seemed to cry her name, mocking her as they flew overhead. She stood up to her chin now, the water lapping over the ends of her hair and curling around her neck like icy fingers, making her shiver uncontrollably.

> "Scully! Scully!" She heard again. But it wasn't the wind screaming, or the birds crying. It was a voice. A familiar voice, calling her name, over and over.

> A part of her wanted to ignore it, to push on, to escape the inevitable heartache that awaited. Yet another wanted desperately for a pair of strong arms to envelope her, to stop her, for a comforting voice to tell her everything would be all right.

> Her mind in turmoil, she slowly turned around and saw Mulder racing over the sand. Dressed in a white shirt and tuxedo pants, his feet were bare, and he was yelling and waving frantically at her.

> "Scully! No! What're you doing?!" He cried urgently. "Come out of the water...please! Don't do it, Scully!"

> "L-leave m-me a-alone...M-mulder!" Scully sobbed, her teeth chattering so hard she could barely speak. "Y-you're getting m-married t-today!"

> "No!" He shouted, shaking his head furiously. "Listen to me, Scully! It's over. It's all over."

> Then Mulder jumped into the surf, oblivious of the water's icy chill, and with a few long, smooth strokes was up beside her.

> "M-mulder, I-I--"

> Scully stopped, her eyes widening in shock. She froze, the sudden realization of where she was and what she was about to do hitting her with the force of a freight train. My God, had she gone crazy?! She was going to drown!

> Panicked, she threw her arms around his neck. "O-oh. . G-God, M-mulder," she gasped, her lips practically blue. "H-help...me, please. I d-don't want to..d-die."

> But Mulder had already scooped her up in his arms and was carrying her to shore.

> "Shh..." he whispered reassuringly. "I've got you, Scully. You're safe. And I'm not going anywhere. Not without you."

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> A short time later, Scully was curled up on a couch in a cozy inn not far from the beach. Mulder had gotten a roaring fire going, and they were both wrapped in plush terry robes, their sodden clothing laid out to dry.

> "Feeling better," Mulder asked gently as he handed her a steaming mug of tea. "Drink this," he ordered. "It'll warm you up."

> Scully nodded as she took the mug from him. Its warmth felt good as she curled her cold fingers around it. She'd finally stopped shivering, and the fire felt wonderful as it melted the dampness from her bones.

> But she was confused and upset, and very ashamed. She couldn't fathom what she'd almost done. It went against everything she

believed in. She was a doctor, for God's sake; her whole life was devoted to saving lives. Did she really believe her own to be worth less than anyone else's. Dear God! How could she, even for the briefest second, have ever considered doing something so tragic, so unthinkable. So final. What if he hadn't come looking for her? If he'd been too late? Did she really want him to bear that burden of guilt when he had so much of his own to bear already?

>
 Her thoughts were interrupted by the sound of Mulder's voice.

> "Now," he said gently, and sat down beside her, "I want to know what on earth possessed you to do something so...stupid." He looked at her intently, his hazel eyes filled with worry and sadness. "Thank God I had a feeling you'd be here."

> Scully remained silent for a moment, staring down into her
teacup.
Slowly, she lifted her blue eyes to him. "What made
you,"she challenged softly, "want to do something so...stupid?"

>
 Mulder winced, her words piercing his heart, the answer to his question reflected in the heartache he saw in her eyes. He'd never meant to hurt her, to drive her to this. How could he have been so blind? She'd nearly died today, because of him! Because he'd been so selfish, so wrapped up in his own feelings, he couldn't see what was right before his eyes. If she had died, he would've gladly walked into the water with no regrets.

>
 "I don't know, Scully," he whispered, tears of guilt and
remorse welling up in his eyes. "I don't love her. I never did. I
guess I just wanted to see if--"

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> He stopped.<br> "If what, Mulder," Scully nudged gently.
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> He cleared his throat, then plowed a hand through his damp hair.
 "If you cared," he went on, his voice barely audible. "If there was even a chance that, maybe, you...loved me."

>
 Loved him? Scully felt a shock run through her. Was he trying to tell her he loved her?

>
 "Scully." Mulder murmured, then took the mug from her hands and placed it on the endtable beside the couch. Turning to her, he took her hand in his, and locked his hazel eyes on her. "I love you," he said, with all his heart. "I've been in love with you, probably since the first day you walked into that dark, basement office. You had my heart from day one. And I've been nothing but a stupid fool. There's no one else...Scully. Just you. It's always been you."

>
 Speechless, Scully slid her arms around him.

>"Oh, Mulder," she whispered, tears streaming down her face. "If you only knew how long I...Oh God, Mulder...I love you so much. I always have, and I always will."

> "Scully." Mulder whispered, pressing his face against her soft
cheek. "Forgive me, please." Then he stretched out on the couch
beside her, and wrapped her in his arms.

> Silently, in the warmth of the fire's glow, they lay contented in
each other's embrace.
 "Why didn't we do this sooner?" Mulder said
teasingly, moments later.

> "I guess that would've been the smart thing, huh?" Scully sniffed, laughing through her tears.
 Then they kissed, long and tenderly, knowing in their hearts, they were each where they both belonged.

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 End.

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>xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx<br>Hope you liked it. It  
know it was a bit
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>sappy and silly, but then, so am I
Comments welcome

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End
file.